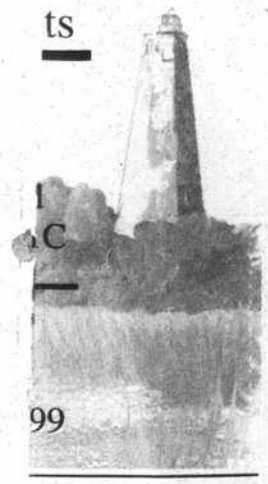


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Volume 68, Number 19

Published ev... in Southport, NC

County bridges

Study shows that majority need repairs

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Close to half of Brunswick County's 105 bridges are rated as substandard and in need of replacement.

But finding funds to do so amidst a \$3.2-billion budget shortfall in highway funding is trickier than crossing the bridges themselves.

According to AAA Carolinas, which rated the bridges using federally required inspection ratings and weekly traffic counts, 55 of the county's bridges are okay but 50 are functionally obsolete or structurally deficient.

That means the bridges are narrow, have inadequate under-clearances, have insufficient load-carrying capacities, are poorly aligned with roadways or can no longer service existing traffic demands. Of those, 26 are declared under 50-percent sufficiency, which means by N. C. Department of Transportation and federal standards they qualify for federal replacement.

The worst-rated bridges in Brunswick County include:

■ A floating barge pontoon bridge to Sunset Beach, placed in 1961 across the Intracoastal Waterway.

■ N. C. 133 bridge over Town Creek between Belville and Southport, built in 1955.

■ N. C. 904 bridge over Scipieo Swamp, built in 1948 in western Brunswick County.

■ N. C. 179 bridge over the Calabash River, built in 1975.

"By publishing this list, we hope to alert motorists to bridges they use that are in need of repair or replacement," said David Parsons, president of AAA Carolinas. "We don't want to wait for an emergency or bridge closing to anger motorists and force the legislature to focus on this problem."

There are 13 bridge replacements for Brunswick County listed on the proposed DOT Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for 2000-2006 that will be officially adopted in July, 1999.

Using federal guidelines combined with traffic volumes, AAA Carolinas concluded approximately 34 percent (6,017) of the state's bridges are considered substandard. That places the state in the bottom fifth of the nation in percentage of substandard bridges.

"One of my top priorities at DOT See Bridges, page 12

STARTING UP

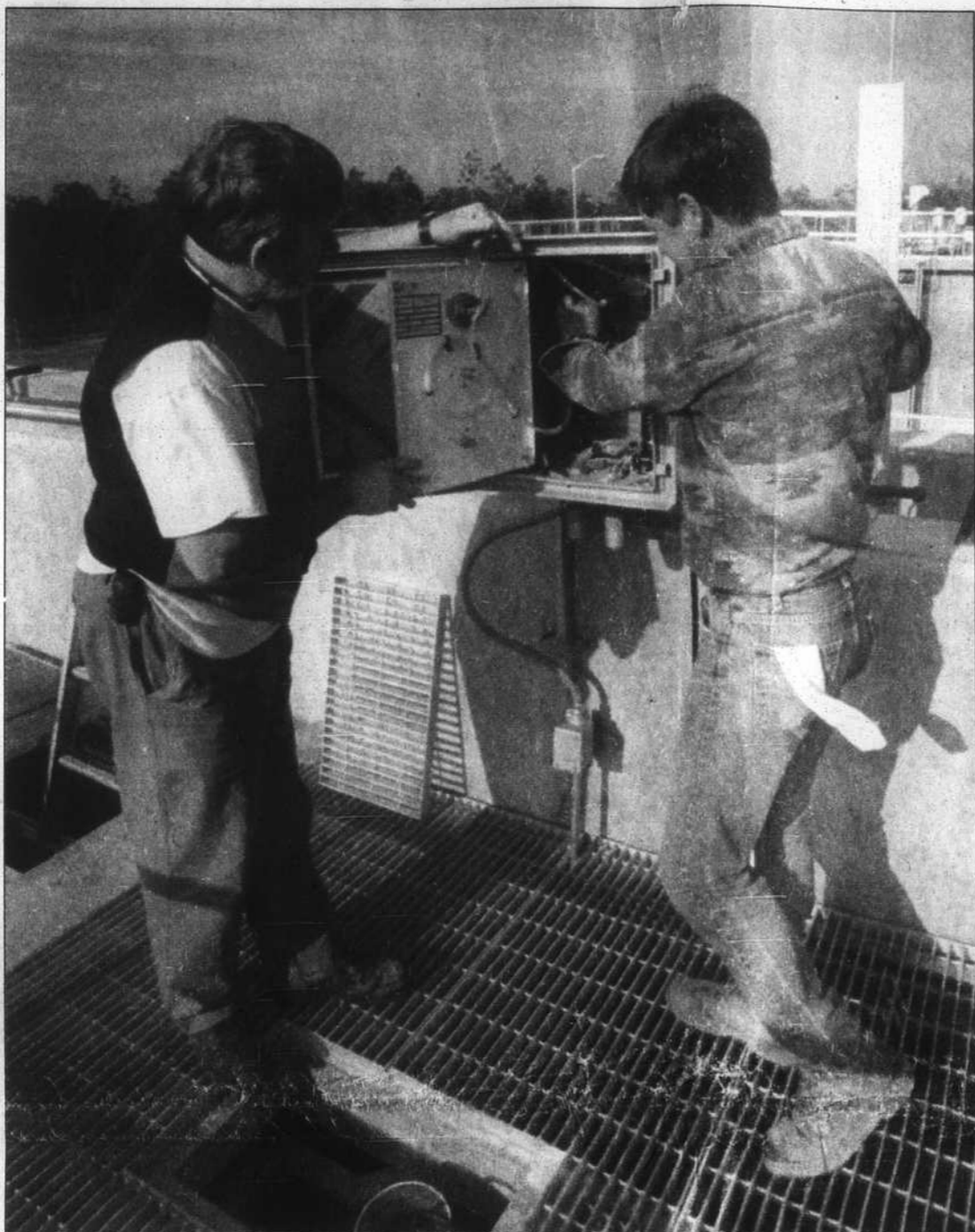


Photo by Jim Harper

Billy Tyson (left) and Bob Pitts spent their time last week seeing if all systems were go at the Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District treatment plant. Tyson is an operator at the plant located between Sea Pines and The Players Club at St. James, and Pitts was project supervisor for construction. Wastewater treatment in the district will begin as soon as customers can make connections. Letters telling citizens how and when to connect were to be mailed today.

SBSD tax man cometh Monday morning 'reception' planned

By Laura Kimball
Feature Editor

Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District property owners received a Christmas surprise last week, only it was in the form of a bill.

The tax assessment charges property owners in SBSBD 30 cents per \$100 assessed valuation of their property.

It is to be paid in addition to the 68.5 cents per \$100 valuation all Brunswick County property owners pay, which are also due next week.

The sanitary district approved a \$912,000 budget for 1998-99 that includes, for the first time, an ad valorem tax for residents and businesses along the Long Beach Road corridor. The county is required

under state law to collect the tax, said county attorney Huey Marshall in August, after Brunswick County commissioners voted in June against performing the collection.

Many property owners are upset and plan to make their feelings known at a sanitary district meeting next Monday morning.

"We should have another Boston Tea Party," said Marvin Martin, owner of Martin's Auto Rebuilders. "We haven't been represented."

Martin received his bill Christmas Eve, but was not surprised since other business owners had received theirs and were grumbling already.

Martin, like many others, is wondering where the money he paid about two years ago in sewer hook-

See SBSBD, page 9

Rural development Some claim regulations off course

By Terry Pope
County Editor

Land surveyor Bobby Long supports new controls on development, but he believes the subdivision ordinance Brunswick County commissioners are about to adopt sets different standards -- one for rural landowners and another for coastal golf course communities.

"I work with rural people, and I have a soft place in my heart for them because I see the struggles they go through," said Long, who was appointed to a task force which recently helped rewrite the county subdivision ordinance. He referred to the new subdivision ordinance that includes 59 pages of regulations, compared to a much simpler and more flexible PUD document by which golf course projects are developed.

The set of rules and regulations that govern new and expanding developments in Brunswick County covers everything from stormwater runoff to sideyard setbacks and street requirements. But the most controversial part of the ordinance deals with required open space in subdivisions that must be set aside

"I can see PUDs in golf courses because you've got open spaces on golf courses, but when you've got PUDs that are not golf courses, that's a horse of a different color."

Bill Sue
District 5 comm.

for scenic or recreational purposes. Commissioners and the Brunswick County Planning Board are to prohibit clear-cut subdivisions, where developers go in and line See Regulations, page 7

Dune project Trees to help stem erosion

By Laura Kimball
Feature Editor

You don't have to stop using your Christmas tree just because the holiday season is over.

A community project organized by the Erosion Control Committee can use your tree to prevent beach erosion at the public street-ends in Long Beach.

For years, the town has been making the most of hundreds of used Christmas trees by either turning them into mulch, or protecting the dunes.

According to Russ Morrison, chair of the Erosion Control Committee, this year they will be used to help keep the dunes together after extra sand is pushed up the beach to the escarpment.

"When you push the dunes up, the sand dries, and a strong wind can blow the dry sand away," he said.

The trees are placed on the back side of the dunes and staked down in an effort to capture the blowing sand.

"Hopefully, instead of blowing away, the sand will settle into the See Trees, page 7

Hospital founder Dr. Doshier to be honored

By Laura Kimball
Feature Editor

A proclamation signed Tuesday recognizes J. Arthur Doshier, founder of Doshier Memorial Hospital in Southport.

Dr. Joe Pat Hatem, who works in the hospital emergency room, is organizing the tribute, the culmination of which will occur January 10, 60 years to the day that Doshier died.

Hatem, who has worked at the hospital since 1985, decided to organize the tribute after he realized he didn't know much about the founder of the hospital.

"I just think this history needs to be preserved. If we don't do it now, it won't get done," he said.

Hatem has lined up about 20 persons to speak about their experiences with Doshier or stories of Doshier at 2 p.m. Sunday, January 10, at Trinity United Methodist Church in Southport. One of those will be Bobby Jones,

a grandson of Doshier who remembers being 11 years old and living with Doshier.

Some of the experiences will be told second-hand by people who were delivered by the doctor and heard stories from their mothers.

"People who were kids then have stories to tell, even if they don't remember them themselves," Hatem said.

Stories range from someone who had his appendix removed on a kitchen table to how Doshier used the basement of his home to do surgery.

Edgar Haywood, hospital administrator, appreciates what Doshier did for the community.

"The man has cast such a tremendous shadow. He's the one that started it all," he said.

Charles Johnson, chair of the hospital board of trustees, agreed.

"He left us all a legacy that we need to protect," he said.



Photo by Laura Kimball

Southport mayor Bill Crowe signed a proclamation Tuesday in recognition of J. Arthur Doshier, founder of Doshier Memorial Hospital. Dr. Joe Pat Hatem, who is organizing a recognition ceremony January 10, stands to Crowe's left.